



special
collections
DOUGLAS
Library



QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
AT KINGSTON

KINGSTON ONTARIO CANADA



ON THE
BALLOT;
FROM THE
WESTMINSTER REVIEW,
FOR
July, 1830.

THIRD EDITION.

WITH CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

[By James Mill and John M.]

Republished by ROBERT HEWARD, at the Office of the Westminster Review, 2, Wellington Street, Strand, London. Sold there, and by RIDGWAY, Piccadilly; by B. STEILL, 20, Paternoster Row; and by all Agents of the Westminster Review.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

T. C. Hansard, Printer, 32, Paternoster Row, London.

Ms. A. 9.11. 1830. 11/54

BALLOT, &c.

ART. I.—*Thoughts on Moderate Reform in the House of Commons.*

London. J. Ridgway. 1830.

THIS article is destined to the consideration of the Ballot; leaving out of account, for the present, all the other ingredients, which go to the formation of a true Representative System, and are indispensable to the establishment of good government.

In proceeding to prove the utility of the ballot, this uncomfortable feeling intrudes itself,—that the task is useless. The evidence is so clear and incontestible, that it seems a loss of time to put it in words. The same considerations, one imagines, must occur to every other mind, and strike it with similar conviction.

Another feeling is produced, by the arguments of those who assume the part of enemies of the ballot. What they say has not the countenance, the colour, not one of the marks, of *bona-fide* reasons; such grounds as a man rests upon for the truth of an opinion really held. All their allegations bear upon them the broad appearance of mere pretexes; the sham pleas, which are invented and set up, as often as men are summoned to defend opinions, which they have adopted and are determined to maintain, from other considerations than those of their truth, or falsehood.

As matters stand, at present, in England, we should never forget, that in determining our preference of the secret or open mode of voting for a Member of Parliament, the real question is this; Whether the people who vote, should really have the choice of the Member of Parliament; Or should only go through the formalities, the mummery of voting, including in it the prostitution of an oath, little regarded by a religious people;—while the whole power of choosing, should be really possessed by other parties.

It may indeed be affirmed,—it is not often so done in plain words, though it is of course habitually assumed,—that the last is the proper result; that the House of Commons ought to be chosen,—that is, a majority of the House,—by a few of the most powerful and wealthy men of the kingdom.

Allowing this assumption for the moment, overlooking all that is monstrous in the averment,—that a few men, who may, by their choice of Members of Parliament, employ, and abuse, the property and the persons of the rest of the community, for their own purposes,—will make a better choice for the community, than the community will make for themselves; we are then met by the inevitable question; Why, if this be so,—if it is indubitably true, that the small number will choose better than the great, and that the choice is actually and fortunately secured to them,—do we not abolish the fraudulent pretence which we now uphold? Why give to the people the appearance of a choice, which is nothing but a delusion? Is there not such a thing as lying by acts, as well as by speech? Is the turpitude of the mendacity less, when it is effected through the medium of the deed, than the word? Is there a more perfect in-

stance, in the whole compass of imposture, of mendacity by deed, than that which is exhibited in the process of open voting for Members of Parliament in England?

If it be affirmed that the fraud and mendacity are, in this instance, good, in consideration of the end; because, though it be very undesirable that the people should have, in their rude and shapeless hands, any security for good government, it is very desirable that they should have the belief of it,—to this an unanswerable objection occurs,—that all hope of upholding such delusion has become vain. There is a new element among the working principles of human society, on the effects of which the retainers of this hope would do well to ponder. The art of printing exists. And the irresistible progress of the information which it diffuses necessitates, not a change merely, but a perfect revolution, in the art of governing mankind. In the times that are gone, the art of government has consisted in a mixture of fraud and force; in which, commonly, the fraud predominated. In the times that are to come, as fraud will be impracticable, and a knowledge of what is good and what evil in the mode of managing the national affairs cannot be withheld from the nation, government will be left either to rational conviction, or to naked force. This is the grand revolution of modern times. This is the new era. And another thing in this altered condition of human affairs may deserve the serious consideration of those who have to do with the powers of government. All history proves, that force alone is inadequate to the government of mankind: even the approaches to the use of it have uniformly failed. The resort to fraud is alone complete evidence of the impotence of force by itself; for, doubtless, the fraud—always imposing shackles, more or less—would never have been submitted to, had the naked force been adequate to the end.—What is the conclusion?—As fraud has, heretofore, been combined with force: fraud must be supplanted by knowledge, in the future history of the world; and force left by itself is not competent to insure the obedience of mankind. It follows, that rational conviction alone is left for the auxiliary of force. But rational conviction will not afford its aid upon any terms except its own. It then becomes the governing power: and becoming the governing power, it becomes the sole power; for rational conviction needs not the aid of force.

But to pass from these clear revelations of reason, which hold forth, as in a mirror, the future history of mankind; one remark is yet necessary to be made, upon the conduct of those abettors of delusion to whom this part of our discourse is more particularly addressed. This their plea for mendacity and imposture,—to which religion ministers as a handmaid, in the instrumentality of the oath—stands directly opposed to the argument, which we shall have occasion to handle more particularly farther on,—that the ballot is unfavourable to that grand principle of morality, Truth. What are we to think of the morality and faith of those men, who display all the vehemence of outraged moral feeling, when they contemplate the chance that, under the safeguard of secrecy, the voter for a Member of Parliament may break the promise—extorted from him by a villain—to violate his conscience and betray the trust confided to him by his country; while at the same time they uphold the virtue and excellence of the grand practical train of mendacity by which the people are to be cheated into a belief, that they have a power, of which they are wholly deprived? Was there ever a more glaring exposure of a hollow pretence? What is different, in the two cases, upon the shewing of these persons themselves, is not the mendacity but—the end. In the one case, the end is, to place the powers of government, without limit or control, in the hands of the few. For that end, according to them, active mendacity is laudable. In the other case, the end is, to limit the exercise of the powers of government to the attainment of the public good, by rendering the men, to whom the powers are confided, responsible to the nation at large. For this

end mendacity, or the very chance of it, is to be treated as the most detestable of all conceivable things. We understand this morality; and we understand the men who seek credit upon the strength of it.

Besides the class, of whom we have hitherto spoken, who think that only the farce of voting should exist,—there is another class of our public men, who say, that they to whom the suffrage is given ostensibly, in England, exercise it substantially.

These men, of course, hold, that such a portion of the people as, in England, have the show, should have the reality, of voting; otherwise they would belong to the class of whom we have already treated, and of whom it is not at present necessary to say any thing more.

It is implied in the supposed existence of such a class, that they believe the true, not the pretended, exercise of the power of choosing by the people who vote, to be necessary to good government.

The good arising from the freedom of suffrage being upon this supposition the greatest possible, the evil from corrupted suffrage, corrupted either by hope of reward or dread of punishment, the greatest possible—what would men do, who were in earnest about the attainment of this good, escape from this evil?

1. They would shew a great anxiety about the securities as they are, to know whether they are as complete as they can be made.

2. They would shew a great anxiety about the securities as they ought to be—that is, the means of making them as perfect as possible.

It will be very instructive to take a view, in these two respects, of the conduct of the class, who, assuming that the suffrage is now free, treat the proposition of ballot as contemptible or odious; in which class are comprehended the major part of the public men of England.

First, let us contemplate the pains which they take to make sure that the suffrage is now free; that there is no mistake in a matter of such vast importance; that the men who vote are really secure from any undue influence, and never lend themselves to the election of any but the men whom their innermost thoughts prefer. Did any of us ever observe any such anxiety? Men in earnest about an affair of so much importance would shew great jealousy of every suspicious appearance.

Elections are of two kinds; those for counties and those for boroughs. Take the first, the county elections. What do we observe in regard to them? Are they perfectly free from suspicion? Does every honourable or right honourable person know with certainty, that no application is ever made to a county voter, which can hang a bias on his mind, and stain his vote with the character of corruption? If this were the case, the absence of all solicitude on this subject, so conspicuous in their conduct, would be perfectly accounted for, without impeachment of their sincerity and truth.

Let us advert to the real matter of fact. A large majority of all those who vote for county members, vote, under such circumstances of dependance, that they cannot vote contrary to what they know to be the inclination of such and such men, without the prospect of serious, often ruinous, consequences to themselves. This is a matter of fact, so notorious, that no man who desires to be treated as a gentleman would venture to deny it, in any other place than an assembly of representatives, chosen according to this impure principle. That, indeed, is a place, where men, under the guidance of a common interest, do make assertions, pleasing to one another, which the rest of the world hear with astonishment; and, when they hear, turn round to one another and say, "If these men were to use words to us for such purposes in private life, after what fashion should we treat them?"

Is there among those honourable and right honourable persons one, who has either been candidate for a county, or supported a candidate; and who

has not, himself, to the utmost of his power, exerted both engines of corruption; both the dread of evil, where that engine was at his command; and the prospect of good, where it was not?

Is this the fact? And do we still witness, in an assembly so-chosen, the language and countenance of men, who maintain, that the members of a representative assembly ought to be chosen without corruption—and that the representative system of Great Britain ought to be preserved as it is?

There is a pretext which is employed, and often successfully, to create and to spread delusion upon this subject. It may be necessary to expose this piece of sophistry before we proceed any farther. It is contained in the language which is held about the legitimate influence of property. We are asked if we would destroy the legitimate influence of property? They accuse us of a desire to preclude the legitimate influence of property; and under the shield of an equivocal expression, they vent a quantity of moral indignation. Those are exceedingly wicked people, who desire to destroy the legitimate influence of property. They who desire secrecy of voting desire to destroy the legitimate influence of property. Can there be a more complete demonstration against them? Can any men be more completely made to appear the proper objects of insult? richly meriting at once the scorn and the hatred of all those to whom property is dear; that is, of all but the most worthless and detestable of mankind, for how can society exist, or the innumerable benefits of it be preserved if property is not secure? Thus the friends of the ballot are represented, obliquely at least, as the enemies of property; and then come all the images of spoliation, confiscation, anarchy, bloodshed, to annex odium to the individuals, and discredit to the cause.

The extreme folly of all this is easy to be made appear. It is only necessary to compel those fair and honourable opponents, to show what they mean by the legitimate influence of property. We, the friends of the ballot, the plebeian, the democratical, the base, are fully persuaded, that there are two influences of property; one good, moral, beneficent; another bad, immoral, pregnant with the most baneful consequences. The first of these we are so far from desiring to see extinguished, that all our endeavour is to increase it. We can prove to demonstration,—at least before such men as care for evidence upon these subjects, and know how to value it,—that the course we propose to follow is not only calculated to raise the moral influence of property, to its greatest height, but that it is the only course by which it can be so raised. With respect to the immoral, the baneful, influence of property, we confess that we are democratical enough to wish to see it wholly destroyed. The men whose mouths are full of the talk about legitimate influence, did not like to be so explicit. We will explain the reason. Their terms, “the legitimate influence of property,” includes both meanings; the moral, and the immoral, influence of property both together. This is exceedingly convenient. In this we see an example of the main artifice by which discourse is rendered the instrument of fraud.—Let two things, one good, and one evil, be confounded under one name; it is not difficult to transfer the approbation, the attachment, or, on the other hand, the detestation and abhorrence, which they severally deserve, from the one to the other. And this delusion is always most easy, in things which are remote from the familiar knowledge of the senses, things which can be apprehended distinctly only by a certain clearness and force of the intellect. It is worth while to attend to the working of this sophistical machinery. The moral influence of property deserves all the approbation which its eulogizers bestow upon it. That we may have clear ideas upon the subject, let us think for a little what it is. Riches, to the purpose we are now contemplating, mean, a certain quantity of power: power of bestowing—good more or less extensively—and also of inflicting evil on our fellow creatures.

It is possible, we all know, for a man who is possessed of this power, to exercise it in such a manner as to become the object of the affection and reverence, not only of all those who come within the sphere of his virtues, but, by sympathy with them, of all those to whom the knowledge of his character is diffused. The opinions, the wishes, of such a man, become a motive to his fellow creatures. We desire to be able to concur with him in his opinions, we desire to be able to forward the objects of his wishes. If such a man expresses a decided preference of one of two candidates; the opinion of his virtue, that he would not recommend the man whom he did not inwardly prefer; and of his wisdom, that he would not be deceived, together with the unavoidable pleasure of giving him pleasure, would always go far to determine the choice of those who live under the influence of his virtues. This is the legitimate influence of property, in the sense in which it is moral. This is an influence which is as safe under the ballot, as without the ballot. The man who proceeds to the scene of election with that reverence in his heart, which the moral influence of property implies, will not be deserted of that moral impulse, when he places his vote in secrecy. The effect of it is as sure as if it were delivered before an assembled world; because it is the mind of the man that acts. The will, the choice, are his own.

Let us next contemplate the other, the immoral influence of property; to which also, by a vile profanation, the term "legitimate influence" is applied. We all know that, commonly, riches are so employed as to create no affection towards the possessor of them; to produce no reverence of his wisdom, and no sympathy with his desires, in the mass of the people by whom he is surrounded. This is not to be imputed, with any degree of harshness, as blame to the individuals. The effect cannot be otherwise, in a country, where the social relations are so ill constituted, as to afford no adequate motive to a more virtuous course. On the contrary, praise is to be awarded to those, as often as we find them, who think that one good of riches is to earn the love and esteem of those among whom they live. We are not without examples of persons who so employ their property—of not a few, who so employ it in the lower degrees,—of some, even in the higher. It is notorious, however, that these are not the great body of opulent persons. The rest seek their influence in a different way. That way is so familiar to us all, that nothing more is wanted for the account of it, than the few words which are necessary to suggest it. We see, by daily example, how easy it is, for those who employ little or no part of their fortune to obtain the favourable sentiments of their countrymen,—nevertheless to make such a use of it as places a considerable number of persons in their dependence,—so to arrange their own permanent position with regard to such and such individuals, as to possess a great power over their happiness; the power of taking from them, or leaving with them, important means of well-being. This power over their happiness is unavoidably attended with a great power over their wills. Men do not choose to act in opposition to the desires of a man who can injure them greatly, when they have great reason to apprehend, that, by so acting, they will ensure whatever evil he can bring upon them.

This we call the immoral influence of property. This is an influence which can be used by the worst of men, as easily as by the best; supposing it for the moment an influence which any good man would consent to use;—an influence, which can be as easily used for the worst, as for the best of ends. The very opposite is the case with the moral influence of property; the native, inborn tendency in the human breast to promote the wishes of the man who has so employed the means of happiness at his disposal, as to fill our hearts with affection and esteem. This can be exercised only by virtuous men—can be employed only for virtuous purposes.

Let us now ask ourselves, under which of these influences, if we had our

choice, should we desire our country to be governed. Suppose we had it in our power to give full scope to the exercise of the moral influence, and suppress entirely the immoral, will any man say that it should not be done?—What we affirm of the ballot is,—that it has this precious quality. It does bestow upon us this invaluable power. This is what we doubt not to be able presently to prove.

To return however for a little to the working of the immoral influence. Let us put before us a case. Let us suppose a country in which the representative system has been long established; and on such a footing that the powers of government are substantially placed in the hands of the representative body. Let us also suppose that portion of the community by whom the representatives are chosen to be so circumstanced that a large majority of them can be placed, and are at last effectually placed, mediately, or immediately, under the immoral influence of the property of a small number of men; in other words, that they vote such men to be representatives, as that small number bid them, under compulsion of the evil which disobedience would bring upon them. Let us rest our thoughts, for a moment, upon the qualities of this social order,—upon such a relation of human beings to one another in the political union.

Let us first observe the obligations of those, to whom the function of voting is consigned. They are elected, and set apart from the rest of their fellow citizens, for the performance of a service to their country, upon which its vital interests depend. They are Trustees for the Community to which they belong; and in a Trust, importing the greatest good or evil, to the vast majority of their countrymen. Can there be a more sacred obligation? Is there any thing binding upon the conscience of man, if this is not to be considered binding in the highest degree? Is it not an act of virtue to be faithful to this Trust? Not an act of vice, to be unfaithful to it? Is there any thing in any conceivable act of treachery to render it odious, which is not in this act? Is not the habitual consciousness of treacherous acts, the perpetual feeling that a man is a villain? Is not the habitual consciousness of having been, and being now a villain, with the intention of continuing to be so, a complete perversion of the moral faculty? Is not such a man completely degraded from the rank of a moral being?

Let us now apply our serious thoughts to the condition of the men who are vested with this trust in our own country. It is matter of fact, notorious, and undisputed, that a certain number of opulent men hold the great majority of them in such a state of dependence, that they command their votes. Whatever may be the opinion of any individual of this large majority respecting the superior fitness of one of two candidates, he will vote for the other, if the man on whom his fears or hopes depend commands him, to what degree soever he may deem him unfit for the exercise of the power, with which he so contributes to invest him. The nature and quality of the proceeding are obvious to all men's perception. The opulent man applies to the voting man the means which are in his power to make him commit an act in the highest degree criminal,—to betray a trust of unspeakable importance, committed to him by his country.

We are told that the voters ought not to be guilty of such criminal compliance. True. So say we. They ought to perish rather. And so they would, under a social order morally constituted. But what is to be expected, in a state of things which has no tendency to generate the high feelings of public virtue; a state of things in which the hollow pretence of public virtue is indeed in sufficient repute, but any effective display of the reality excites only feelings of hatred; a state of things in which the interests of the men who have the lead in the country, and who set the fashion, in morals, as in clothes, are habitually pursued in opposition to the interests of the country; a state of

things in which not only the morals of the people (at least any morals except those which are cultivated for the benefit of Priests and Masters) are neglected from their infancy, but the means are withheld by which even the seeds of morality could be sown in their breasts? Does their country in this manner abandon the care of the people's morals; and does it reproach them with the want of them? Inconsistency here is not all;—the inconsistency has dishonesty for the cause of it. The people are placed in circumstances in which they cannot have morals—the grand morals we now speak of—the ennobling sentiment in the breast of every man to regard the public interest as his own. We upbraid them with this; and what next? What is the inference we draw? Only this—that the care of the public ought to be abandoned; and a few men ought to have the power placed in their hands of sacrificing, according to their discretion, the interests of their country to their own. Is the inference fairly drawn? Is it supported by the premises? The virtue of the people, you say, is weak. Unhappily it is so, deplorably weak; What then? Would it not be good to take all possible means to prevent it from being exposed to strong temptation? So say the men, who recommend the ballot. This is denied by the men, who resist the ballot, and who of course desire that the bad morals of the people, and all their pernicious consequences, should remain; as he who rejects the remedy, clings to the disease. Who are the men who profit by these bad morals? The men in whose hands, through that odious instrumentality, the powers of government are placed. Have they any interest, in improving the morals, by the badness of which they derive advantage of such importance?—Is it not a dreadful state into which a nation is brought, when its leading men have an interest in the badness of the morals of the people? Is it in the nature of things that, so situated, the morals of the people should be good.

Acknowledging, as we do most fully, the criminality of the voters; deeply sensible of the degree to which they are demoralized and degraded, by the part they act in returning members to parliament, let us now turn to the men who influence their votes, and endeavour to make an honest estimate of their virtues.

Let us first look at their conduct in its essence, and afterwards consider it in its circumstances. What is the nature of the act, when a man attains the end he has in view, by being the cause of the criminal act of another person? Suppose the object is to avoid the payment of a just debt; and that the man in question hires a person to make a false oath, which secures him that advantage; he is of course regarded as guilty of the perjury, in a higher degree, if possible, than the man by whose lips it is performed. Suppose the object is, to obtain possession of a fortune by the death of the person who holds it; and that the man we are supposing hires an assassin who executes his purpose: is not he who hires the assassin the real author of the murder?

Who is there that has not already made the application to the case which it is our present business to illustrate? The voter for a member of parliament has a trust placed in his hands, on the discharge of which the highest interests of his country depend. Moral obligation is without a meaning, if the faithful discharge of this is not among the highest of all moral acts; the faithless discharge one of the basest of all immoral ones. To render this high obligation more binding still, the sanction of an oath is added. The voter solemnly swears, that he will not betray, but will faithfully execute, his trust. What happens? The unfortunate voter is in the power of some opulent man; the opulent man informs him how he must vote. Conscience, virtue, moral obligation, religion, all cry to him, that he ought to consult his own judgment, and faithfully follow its dictates. The consequences of pleasing, or offending, the opulent man, stare him in the face; the oath is violated, the moral obligation is disregarded, a faithless, a prostitute, a pernicious vote is given. Who is the author of this perjury, this prostitution, this treachery? There are two

odious criminals; but assuredly the voter is the least criminal, and the least odious of the two.

Observe the horrid spectacle; two sets of men, the one comparatively rich, the other poor, so placed with respect to one another, that they act upon one another, for mutual corruption; that they gain their ends upon one another, only by a renunciation of the most sacred obligations, and the commission of the greatest crimes; that, in order to have inward peace, in such a course of acting, they must succeed in obliterating every trace of the higher morals from their minds. The sense of obligation to the community to which they belong, the regard due to a trust, are not compatible with their situation. The men who have occasion for the prostitution, the perjury, the faithlessness of voters, and the most perfect indifference on their part to the interests of their country, must beware how they appear to have any regard for morality before such persons, or any regard for country. The appearance they put on is a curious one: it is that of a feigned scorn for all the public virtues, and a real hatred. This mixture of feeling gives a curious character even to the countenances of persons of the higher ranks in this country, distinguishable in most, and very marked in some.

When men have renounced the real virtues, they look out for substitutes, to conceal the state of their character, and, if possible, make its outside fair. It would be inconvenient, in almost any state of the world, for a set of men to proclaim their indifference to the good of the community in which they live; even where they are exerting themselves with the utmost energy to place the interests of the community permanently in a state of sacrifice to their own. What do they do? They find out whereon to display their zeal something which may be made to appear the interest of the community, but is in reality their own. Thus, under the old monarchy of France, the privileged classes possessed Loyalty in a high degree—an ardent love of the *grand monarque*; in other words, an ardent love of seeing placed as much as possible of other men's property at the disposal of the king, which he with royal bounty distributed among them. Our own gentry have a still better cry. It is the constitution—the British constitution! When trampling on every moral obligation in their way to their object, they still claim to be patriots, on the strength of a love to the constitution. Their actions interpret their words. Their love of the constitution is a love of suborned and prostituted votes; a love of the power, thus placed in their hands, of raising taxes without limit upon the community, and dividing the proceeds among themselves. Loyalty, constitution, are pretty sounds. But what they mean is, Plunder.

The prostituted voter, we said, is less criminal, than his corrupter. Not only is he less criminal in the principal act; he being to a great degree the passive tool, the other the active agent; his crime being single, that of the suborner multiplied in every individual whose villainy he has secured; he is also less criminal in the circumstances of his act, they almost all in his case being extenuating, almost all in his suborner's case aggravating circumstances, of the guilt.

For what is the object of the suborner?—To seat himself in parliament. This may be for a public purpose, or a selfish one. The public purpose is not that of the majority of candidates. No man, even a member of parliament, out of the House of Commons, will pretend that it is. No man, who knows his countrymen, and who means not to counterfeit or deceive, will deny, that those who go into the House constitute two classes; those who go in for the vanity of the thing; and those who go in for plunder; and that the rest, at the highest estimate, constitute a miserable exception. Take the most favourable case, that of the man who goes into the House with a virtuous intention; this is not one of those motives, which urging a man with vehemence in a particular direction, takes off from the odiousness of a bad action. But pass this

case, and go to those which so nearly include the whole body. Take one of the men whose object is mere vanity—the distinction of being a member of parliament. Is there any thing, in this petty, vulgar, motive, to extenuate the guilt of an enormous crime? The motive of that proportion of candidates who seek admission for the sake of plunder, is itself wicked, and of course adds to the wickedness of the conduct by which the admission is procured.

Contrast with these motives that of the voter on whom the immoral influence of property takes its effect. His situation, most commonly, is that of an occupant of the land, or of a house, of the man by whom his vote is suborned. His prospect is that of being turned out of such occupation, if he does not lend himself to the designs of his suborner. In general this is a calamity of the severest kind. Often it is ruin, or something little short of it. In most cases it is a great revolution in the circumstances of the man, and his family; full of anxiety, full of labour, full of risk. Not to incur such a catastrophe must always be among the strongest desires, the most overpowering motives, of a human being. It is a crime in any one, even for such a motive as this, to betray his trust, to violate his faith pledged to his country, and, as far as he is concerned, to deliver it up to misgovernment and plunder. But assuredly, if temptation makes any difference in the degree of crime, and every system of law in the world assumes that it makes the greatest, there is no comparison between the turpitude of the man who gives a dishonest vote in such circumstances, and the turpitude of him who suborns it.

Another tremendous accusation lies upon the class of suborners. They are the class by whom chiefly the moral character of the voting classes is formed. The opinions which they spread of what is honourable, and what dishonourable, become the governing opinions. But the habits of thinking, about what is right and wrong, what is shameful, what the contrary, diffused among any people, constitute the moral character of that people. If pains are successfully taken with them to prevent their thinking a certain course of action shameful, though it really be so, they lose by degrees all moral feeling on the subject; in other words, are reduced to the most frightful state of moral corruption; they obey every temptation to any vicious act of the kind supposed, without the smallest self-condemnation or moral repugnance; the most feeble, the most contemptible of motives, therefore, is always adequate to the production of the crime.

Those who desire to get possession in their own country of the powers of government, exempt from all real responsibility, that is, for the purposes of plunder—for in such circumstances the motives to public plunder are irresistible—have no stronger interest, than in preventing, as far as they can, the existence of any such opinion as that public plunder is disgraceful; that is to say, public plunder in the essence of the thing; for as to certain forms of it—if such as they have no occasion to practise—they care not to what degree public opinion may be turned against them; nay, are ready with their aid to heap disgrace upon them, as a convenient method of diverting attention from the forms in which they indulge, and preventing them from being duly considered and understood. If they have such an interest in preventing public plunder from being reputed disgraceful, they have no less an interest in saving from such moral condemnation all the crimes which minister to that result, and are necessary to its attainment. Among these the most important by far is the prostitution of votes. And, accordingly, no more remarkable instance can be produced of the power of the leading classes over the moral sentiments of mankind; the efficacy with which the successful prosecution of their sinister interests generates moral corruption in the body of the people; than the utter extinction of moral feeling in England with regard to voting for members of parliament. Shallow, thoughtless men, even if they are not corrupt, can hardly be made to conceive the extent of this calamity; for, along with the

extinction of the moral feeling in regard to voting, must go the moral feeling in regard to acts in general, by which the common good and evil rarely are affected; the very notion of virtue and vice therefore becomes divorced from the thought of public acts as such; and men may be wicked to the highest degree in public transactions, without becoming disgraceful. This is nearly the last stage of public calamity; for there remains but one alternative;—the eternal existence of the misrule;—or a convulsion to obtain deliverance from it.

We conceive that little more remains, to demonstrate the utility and the necessity of the ballot: For we affirm, and think we shall be able in a few words to prove, that the ballot is a remedy for a great portion of all this evil; easy of application, and of all remedies, possible to be applied, the most unexceptionable, on account of any evil consequences arising out of itself. We reason thus:—If it be proved that any where an enormous amount of evil exists, that an agency may be applied which will remove, if not the whole, a great part of all this evil, and that to this agency no hurtful consequences are attached, which can be reputed an equivalent for one of the millions of evils which it will remove, the argument for its application seems to be as complete as demonstration can in moral subjects be. We know but one objection which can be made to it—that it is too complete. This is an objection not unlikely to be made. There are people who, precisely because it is complete, and, being complete, is not conducive to their ends, may call it an *a priori* argument, or by some such unpopular name; and will, on that ground, with much briskness, infer, that it is good for nothing. People who have their reasons for not liking a conclusion to which demonstration leads, have nothing for it but to decry demonstration. They indeed obtain credit only among the blockheads. But then the blockheads are the greatest both in number and power. It is not every man's ambition that goes higher than this.

We suppose ourselves to be arguing with persons, who really hold that there is a difference between one government and another: that it is of great importance to the community, whether the persons, to whom the management of their affairs is confided, do or do not act under an efficient responsibility to them. We suppose that we are arguing with persons who hold the British constitution to be something more than a name. All the eulogies we hear pronounced upon it proceed upon the assumption, that there is an immeasurable distance between a good government and a bad; that in the good government there are securities for the good conduct of those to whom the management of the public affairs is confided; and that in the bad government there is a want of those securities.

Representative government is a contrivance for affording those securities, by giving to the public the choice of the persons who have the management or at least a perfect control over the management of the public affairs. But where are those securities, if the people have not this choice—if they have nothing but the name of choosing, with some vain and fraudulent formalities; while the real power of choosing is exercised uniformly and steadily by the same small number of men. This small number of men are really, then, the governors, under no responsibility at all. Is it possible that in these circumstances the public affairs should not be mismanaged;—that they should not be managed under a perfect subserviency to the interests of that small number; in other words, that the interests of the governed should not, under a government so constituted, be habitually sacrificed to the interest of the governors? Does badness of government consist in any thing else than this?

Now is not the time to enter upon the display of all that is contained under the dreadful term, badness of government; or, of the items in the shocking catalogue which are most remarkable in the government of our own

country; though nothing is more important than the frequent recounting of those evils, which they who suffer them always know, but of which they lose the accurate and pungent sense, if the thought of them is not frequently and vividly renewed.

The question we have to resolve will now be seen to be easy, because it turns upon a single point. All the evils of misgovernment, which we suffer, and to which we are liable, cumulated with all the evils of that horrid immorality which results from the giving and suborning prostitute votes, arise from this;—that the people of England do not choose the members of parliament, that the majority of them are chosen by a small number of men.

It is so clear as not to admit of being rendered clearer by argument, that what gives this small number of men the power of choosing is the openness of the voting. It is the openness, therefore, of the voting that corrupts the government of England, and corrupts the morals of the people of England. That which enables the men, who hold the voters in dependence, to suborn the votes, is their knowing how the vote is given. Render it impossible for them to know how any vote is given, and their power over it is gone. The power either of rewarding a prostitute vote, or punishing an honest one, is useless whenever it has been made impossible to be known whether the prostitute or the honest vote has been given. Effect this impossibility; take away the power of knowing how the man who votes for a member of parliament has bestowed his vote, and see the consequences. You give effectual securities to the public, that the affairs of the public will be managed for their interest, not sacrificed to the interest of their rulers; and you take away at the same time one of the most terrible engines of moral depravation, which ever was wielded for the pollution and degradation of any portion of mankind. Are not these important effects to be derived from so simple a cause? And is not the cause which produces such effects the more to be cherished and esteemed because of its simplicity?

The men in parliament who allow themselves to speak without repugnance of parliamentary reform at all, generally confine their favour to moderate reform. If the actions of these men corresponded with their words, we should have them with us on the question of the ballot. For can there be any change more moderate, than that of converting an open vote into a secret one? Allow every thing else to remain as it is. Keep to the same voters exactly, and distribute them after the same manner. Do not even alter the duration of parliaments. Not that these things are as they should be. They might be altered, we think, for the better. But the ballot would operate so powerfully as an instrument of good, that the inconveniences which might still arise from these defects, if we had the ballot, would be far less severely felt.

This moderate, very moderate reform, could obviously have none of those effects, which are commonly painted in tragic colours, to frighten weak, fearful people, from every thought of reform. It cannot possibly have any farther effect, than that of bringing the practice of the English constitution into a conformity with its theory—that theory, which renders it “the envy of surrounding nations, and the admiration of the world.” That theory, undoubtedly, is, that the people choose. The practice is, that they do not choose. The ballot, and that alone, can enable them to choose, and render the British constitution in reality what it now is only in pretence.

There is another important argument in favour of the ballot. Nothing else can render the constitution of England conformable to the conception and expectations of its kings. When they, upon some great emergency, have recourse to a new, as a fitter instrument than an old, parliament, they declare that they have recourse to the sense of their people; meaning, of course, that the sense of their people is expressed in the choice of members of parliament.

They know not, it seems, that it is not the sense of their people which is so expressed, but the sense of a small number of suborners of votes.

There are two blemishes in our representative system, as it stands, which even those who admire it as it stands, allow to be blemishes; and on which they are often pleased to descant as great and horrible evils. These are—expense of elections, and bribery in corrupt boroughs. Often have they tried their hands at legislating for a remedy of those evils. Notwithstanding the greatness of their efforts, notwithstanding the magnitude of the expended power,—the difficulties have still overmatched them. The collective wisdom of the nation has been baffled in a contest with cost, and corruption; and these blemishes still remain. It ought, with such parties, to be a strong recommendation of the ballot, and would be, if they were honest and sincere in what they say, that it would radically cure these acknowledged diseases of the parliament. See how clearly and immediately the result appears. With regard to bribery, who would go to the expense of paying any man for a vote, when, for aught he knew, it was given against himself? As money for votes rendered in secret can have no effect whatever to secure the vote for which it is given, the man would be mad, who would throw it away in that manner.

Let us next attend to the cost incurred at elections, without regarding what it consists in, expense of conveying distant voters, entertainments; or favours of other description, money, or money's worth; the ballot would put an end to it all. Men will not incur expense for the attainment of an object, when it is clear that such expense can have no effect whatever in procuring the object. This is most indubitably the case with money spent on account of a vote given in such secrecy, that whether it is given for you or against you, you never can know. Under such a system the practical consequences would be, that only those men would vote who could do so free of expense, or were willing to defray their own charges.

We observed, toward the beginning of this article, that the enemies of the ballot in parliament are divided into two classes: one that of the men who admit the limited number of real choosers, and defend it as the perfect state of the British constitution; the other, that of the men who, though they partly admit, partly also deny, the limitation of the number of real choosers by the operation of open voting, but who loudly express their conviction that voting ought to be free, and ought not to be perverted from its honesty, by either of the two instruments of corruption, dread of evil, or prospect of reward. The former class are a very small minority in parliament, and the ground they take so very untenable, that they deserve no more of our regard. The latter class may be considered as making up the body of parliament. To them we now address ourselves, with an assurance of accomplishing one or other of two objects; either gaining their co-operation; or covering them with the shame of holding a language which their actions belie. By what pretence, we ask them, can you attempt to resist our conclusions? Will not the ballot render voting independent and honest; which you allow it is not at present, so perfectly at least as were to be wished. Will it not effectually annihilate expense of elections, as well as bribery and corruption? Will it not, in this manner, effect all which you conceive to be necessary to render the representative system of England perfect? It is, if your conception be right, a perfectly radical reform of parliament; and that by means to which no artifice can attach the idea either of difficulty or danger. The change of open into secret voting excites no disturbance; weakens the security of no man's rights; takes away no influence of property, except its immoral influence: while it is attended with two effects of unspeakable importance; it brings into action the only security for good government; and it puts an end to the most demoralizing traffic between the leading men of the community and the body of the people, that ever had existence upon the face of the earth.

The language which some of them sometimes employ to meet, and resist all this body of evidence is truly astonishing. If it was not seen, it would not be credible, that men could be found who without any necessity would stand up and shew such weakness.

"The ballot is not English;" that is one of their phrases, in speaking against it. Why not English? Upon what ground do you take upon you to refuse the use of the term "English" in conjunction with the word "ballot?" If the ballot be a necessary means to the most important of all ends, and the word "English," is not applicable to it, the word "English" is then not applicable to one of the best of things—that is all. But the word "English," we suppose is truly applicable to the system of suborning, and prostituting, votes, by which the character of Englishmen is depraved, and the interest of the English nation are trafficked away; and if so, it is applicable to one of the worst of things. Assuredly, the men who treat the word "English" in this fashion, are not the men who use it with the greatest honour.

The state of mind, however, of the man who, in the great council of the nation, when a solemn question is opened, whether a certain expedient is or is not necessary to secure the best interests of the community, gets up and pretends to terminate the whole deliberation, by refusing the application of the word "English," must be regarded through all time as a curiosity.

This is a new test of good and evil. In point of handiness, it certainly would be, if fit to be trusted, a very desirable one. Is any man in doubt, at any time, about the goodness or badness of any thing—only touch it with the word "English": immediately, as when the Devil was touched by the spear of Ithuriel, it starts up in its real shape and dimensions; and all uncertainty about it is dispelled. There is, however, one objection to it, and that a serious one. It would supersede the use of wisdom, in the great council of the nation; and would entirely put an end to the veneration which is now, on account of its wisdom, so justly bestowed upon that august assembly, by all who enjoy the spectacle of its proceedings, or have the happiness of tasting their effects.

We fear also it is a test, the use of which ought to be confined to the privileged hands; for if the people were allowed to apply it, as well as their rulers, there might be strange diversity. That might appear very English to the one, which would be very un-English to the other. For example, the people might think every thing which was really good toward saving them from the curse of misrule, was most perfectly English; and of course the ballot itself, if it was a thing of that admirable tendency. They might be led the more easily into that mistake, in respect to the ballot, by observing what is the English practice; that the ballot universally obtains where those, who have the power of determining the mode of voting, have a real interest, however slight, in the freedom and independence of the votes.

The men who themselves are in the habit of using the ballot, on small and on great occasions, during the whole course of their lives, stand up and say to an assembly of men who are all doing the same thing, that they ought to reject the ballot in parliamentary elections, because it is not English! Did we not speak true, when, towards the beginning of this discourse, we said, that the pleas of the enemies of the ballot had not even the look of honest arguments? that it was impossible to consider them as any thing but the pretences; which must be found, when a position, which cannot be supported by reason, is to be maintained in spite of it?

Among the opponents of the ballot in parliament are some who cannot so much be said to argue, as to groan, and use inarticulate cries against it. Of this kind are those who say, They hope that they shall not live to witness the time, when Englishmen shall not have the spirit to deliver their vote in the

face of day. It would be as honest, and about as wise, to say, they hope not to live to witness the time, when every Englishman shall not have his carriage and pair. If they were to say, which would be the only thing to the purpose, that they hoped not to live to see the day when an Englishman would not go to the hustings, and fearlessly vote for the man of his choice, without regard to the dictation of any person upon earth; the falsehood of the pretext would be too glaring to be successful, even in a country where as much is done by hypocrisy as in England. It is matter of fact, notorious and undisputed, that a great majority of those who vote for members of parliament in England, proceed to the hustings under the influence of what they either hope to receive, or dread to suffer, and prostitute themselves in the most infamous manner, by voting, not according to the dictates of their own minds, but like crouching slaves, at the will of another. Are these the circumstances in which votes are commonly given in England, and are men found who say they hope not to live to see the day when Englishmen will be afraid to vote openly? Patience would be found to hear them, in no assembly, we think, upon earth, but one composed of the very men who suborn such votes. Courage to vote as Englishmen vote, at the command of those by whom they are bought, or driven, is the courage of the slave, when he lends his body to the lash. Are there men, who pretend a horror at the prospect of parting with this, and receiving in exchange for it the protection of secrecy, because secrecy would degrade the people?

A wish for elevating the minds of the people is an admirable wish, and the profession of it is truly a pretty profession; but the true character of the profession is known by the character of the things which follow. Is the wish not to see Englishmen vote secretly, a wish that Englishmen should have sufficient independence of mind to vote as they please though all the world should know in what manner they vote? We also entertain that wish most fervently. We have another strong wish; that all Englishmen were above being paupers. We apprehend, however, it would little answer any good purpose for us to use the *formula* of those who level their wishes against the ballot, and say, they hope not to live to see the day when Englishmen will live upon charity. Poverty makes the people of England willing to live on charity. Dependent circumstances make them willing to prostitute their votes. Your choice lies between prostitute voting and secret voting. There is the deepest degradation in prostitute voting. Not only is there no degradation in secret voting, but it saves from all the degradation inseparable from prostitute voting; all men, therefore, who deprecate the degradation of the people, not with hypocrisy, but in earnest, are of course the advocates of the ballot.

But, on what authority, we shall be asked, do we make the assertion, that there is no degradation in secret voting? On the authority, we reply, of those very men who say that there is. What! do the same men, who say that secret voting is degrading, say also that it is not degrading? They do; as you, and as they, and as all men, are perfectly aware. You see them constantly practising the ballot, and introducing the use of ballot, without a thought of self-degradation, wherever it is really their wish that the vote should be protected from external influence. In order to protect themselves from the trifling inconvenience of displeasing somebody, by black-balling an improper candidate for admission into a club, they themselves take the benefit of secret voting. Can there be a more perfect proof that they do not regard it as degrading? Can there be a more perfect proof that when they refuse to the honest voter for a member of parliament the same protection against far more serious consequences, on the pretence that it is degrading, they are not sincere? Observe, too, the difference of the ends. That improper members may not be admitted into a club, the secret voting is needful in the one case. That improper members may not be admitted into the legislature, it is need-

ful in the other. Do you dare to say, that the use of it is not degrading in the former of these two cases, that it is degrading in the latter? That the end sanctifies the means in the former case, not in the latter?

"I cannot abide muffling up," says one honourable gentleman; and by such an appeal to sentimentality, manfully proposes to decide one of the most important questions of legislation. If a great end is to be gained by muffling up, why should there not be muffling up? The nature of the pretext is so manifest, that it would seem not to be worth exposing; and yet there are persons for whose sake it may be proper to attract a little attention to it. If there were any argument in these words, it would rest upon this, that all secrecy is bad. If some secrecy is good, the man who says he does not like it, renders us one good service; he gives us full warning against taking him for a guide. Every body knows, this honourable gentleman knows, that, in itself, secrecy is neither good nor bad. It is good, when it is the means to a good end; bad, when it is the means to a bad end. It is not base in the General, it is meritorious, to "muffle up" his designs from the enemy. The more perfectly he can, by concealment, stratagem, dissimulation, guile, delude their expectation, the more is he admired. It is not base in negotiation for the statesman to conceal with the utmost care the extent of the concessions he would make, rather than fail in the attainment of his object. Every government makes a point of concealing such part of its proceedings, and, as far as possible, such particulars in the national affairs, as it would be detrimental to the nation to let other nations know. If it be detrimental to the nation, that the mode should be known in which a man gives his vote for a member of parliament, that also, for the same reason, ought most assuredly to be kept from being known. One is ashamed to feel oneself obliged to contend against such puerilities.

There are some persons, who make a bold use of certain assertions with regard to the American United States, in opposition to the ballot. Some people have been there, and on the strength of a drive through the country, performed in a few months, give us their assurance, that, in the United States, the ballot does not answer expectation. Others have derived the same insight from conversations had with people of the United States.—What is the value of such assertions? Just nothing at all. Vague, hazarded declarations, respecting the interior and hidden working of the institutions of a foreign country, put forth in a debate to silence an adversary, declarations no man would repose even the smallest confidence in, if the question regarded a matter, about the truth of which he was really in earnest; the prudence, or imprudence, for example, of investing his fortune in the United States. He would go to other evidence, than the second-hand testimony of the one, or the reports, delivered by the other, of what was seen by the eyes, respecting a thing not to be understood by the eyes.

This, in itself, is a point of importance. It cannot be passed without notice. It is not generally understood of how very small a number of men the statements, respecting countries they have seen, can be received with moderate reliance. The number of accurate observers in the world is exceedingly small. It is well known to all those persons who have occasion for accurate information, to judges, for example, and others, who take evidence in courts of justice, how inconsiderable the proportion of persons is who see and hear accurately, or can, by the utmost exertion of their wills, give a true account of some ordinary and not very complicated scene, in which they have been present. The merit of the judge consists, not in relying upon the statement of one witness, or the statement of another, but in confronting the statements, and from the knowledge he has of the laws of human nature, and the order of human transactions, divining the truth.

If such is the inferiority of individual testimony in the ordinary transactions

of ordinary life, what must it be in the accounts we receive of countries and nations? Here the men who have occasion for accurate knowledge, the historian, for example, of a country, the state of which he is obliged to expound to readers who have but little previous acquaintance with it, have most remarkable experience of the necessity of the deductive process, in order to arrive at the truth. It is not this or that man's testimony, but the result of all the testimonies, which affords any sure ground of reliance. Individual testimony here is beyond measure less perfect than that which is delivered before the judge, both because it relates to matters, of which it is infinitely more difficult to give correct testimony, and because it is delivered in circumstances far less favourable to accuracy. By combining the whole, and interpreting one thing by another, certain leading points are made out, and a philosophical acquaintance with human nature is the guide to the rest. In all history, the great, the public, notorious facts, alone, are known with certainty. The minute particulars almost always rest upon very indifferent evidence. The great, the leading facts, therefore, interpreted by a philosophical knowledge of human nature, comprehends the whole amount of the information which history bestows.

We have the very fortunate advantage of high authority upon this subject. M. Talleyrand, whose character will not be challenged as a practical man, even by those who misunderstand the value of what they distinguish by that application, passed, as is well known, a part of the time of his emigration in the United States. His testimony will be regarded by every body as possessing peculiar value. What is it that he tells us? That there are certain grand leading facts, known to all the world; and that he who is capable of interpreting these facts, knows more about the United States, in whatsoever part of the world he may be, than the ordinary man who is upon the spot, examining every thing with his five senses.

There is a letter which Madame de Genlis received from this extraordinary man, during his residence in the United States, from which we extract the following passage:

“Ce pays-ci est une terre où les honnêtes gens peuvent prospérer, pas cependant aussi bien que les fripons, qui comme de raison, ont beaucoup d'avantages. J'avois envie d'écrire quelque chose sur l'Amerique et de vous l'envoyer; mais je me suis aperçu que c'était un projet insensé. Je renvoie le peu d'observations que j'ai faites aux conversations que j'espere avoir quelque jour dans les longues soirées avec vous. L'Amerique est comme tous les autres pays: il y a quelques grands faits que tout le monde connaît, et avec les quels on peut d'un cabinet de Copenhague deviner l'Amerique toute entiere. Vous savez quelle est la forme du gouvernement; vous savez qu'il y a de grands et immenses terrains inhabités où chacun peut acquérir une propriété à un prix qui n'a aucun rapport avec les terres d'Europe: vous connoissez la nouveauté du pays, points de capitaux, et beaucoup d'ardeur pour faire fortune; point de manufactures, parceque la main-d'œuvre y est et y sera encore longtemps trop chère. Combinez tout cela, et vous savez l'Amerique mieux que la majorité des voyageurs, y compris M. de L. — qui est ici faisant des notes, demandant des pièces, écrivant des observations, et plus questionneur milles fois que le voyageur inquisitif dont parle Sterne.”

— *Memoires de Madame de Genlis*, t. 5. p. 55.

When certain persons, therefore, affirm to us, that the experiment of the ballot has been unsuccessful in the United States, our reply is, that we do not believe them. Why do we not believe them? Because, when we weigh the evidence which is contained in their assertions, and the evidence in opposition to them, we find the latter to preponderate. In the first place, with regard to the assertions, we know not how far those who make them do themselves rely

upon them. House of Commons' morality does not imply the existence of many men who will keep back an assertion, useful for their purpose, because they know little or nothing about the evidence on which it rests. In the next place, if we knew that they were sincere, we know not what sort of observers they are; but we do know that few observers are to be trusted. We know not from what circumstances they have deduced their inference; or, if they rest their assertions upon the declarations of other people, from what sort of people they received them. Any man, who pleases, may resort to a pretty certain test of the value which ought to be attached to what ordinary people deliver about the condition of a country. Let him but ask himself this question. To how many, of all the men he knows, would he confide the task of giving an account, on which he would rely, of the country in which they were born and bred? Of the uncertainty of men's observations, even when confined to a single point, the controversies of every day afford the most glaring evidence. Can we find a better example than that which we have all had recently before us? The people of England have been divided into two parties, about the distresses of the country. One would imagine that this was not one of those circumstances which it required eyes of an extraordinary keenness to discern. Yet if you asked a man of one of those parties, whether the country was in distress, he would affirm it; if you asked a man of the other, he would deny it; and both with equal confidence. Upon the experience of which are you to rely? Of neither, because the bulk of the persons who form opinions upon such subjects are led to them by partial observations. Men judge of an object by the things in it to which they direct their attention. A strong bias of the mind directs the attention to that part of the circumstances to which the bias inclines; and upon that part exclusively the opinions of ordinary men are formed.

What trifling, then, is it, to go to uncertain testimony, of which we know only that it is of no value, when the great circumstances of the case, decisive of the question, are perfectly known to us? We know well what secret voting is; and we know that it may be rendered a complete security against external influence, in voting for members of parliament. If the Americans did use it badly, that would be no argument against the thing itself. The Americans have little motive to the accurate use of it, because, by two circumstances in their situation, the general wealth of the people, and the great rarity of large fortunes, the means are wanting of placing more than an insignificant portion of them in dependence. There would be no wonder, then, if the Americans were not very nice about the machinery of the ballot, and cared but little whether it was so used as to work with much, or with little accuracy. Their case and ours in this respect are diametrically opposite; they do not depend upon the ballot for independent voting; we cannot possibly obtain it by any other means.

But beside all this, we know upon better evidence than the assertions made in parliament, that the Americans do esteem the ballot. It is evidence enough that they continue to use it. Why should they unless they liked it? The Americans are not in our miserable condition. They cannot have institutions, under which they suffer, fastened upon them for ages in spite of their inclinations. What, then, is the fact? So far from being diminished, the use of the ballot has been continually extended in America. Some of the States, in which, originally, it was not employed, have, upon the revision of their constitutions, introduced it; and in not one, in which it has ever been used, has the thought been entertained of discontinuing it. Nothing can be more worthless, therefore, than the pretence that America affords experience against the benefit of secret voting.

Of all the assertions, however, ventured in parliament, to oppose the argument for the ballot, there is certainly not one, the audacity of which is more worthy of our admiration, than what we are next to mention;—that secret voting has no

tendency to ensure independent voting. This is an infallible test of character. We strongly recommend the use of it, in the case of public men, to all who desire to understand them. We may be perfectly certain, that the man who makes this assertion will make any other assertion whatsoever, if he believes it useful to his purpose; that twice two, for example, make not four, but four hundred. Take either supposition, that he does not see the truth, or that he sees it and belies it. You, probably, will not affirm, that the man who sees the truth and belies it, in one instance, because it suits his purpose, will not, when it suits his purpose, do so again. And, if any man's intellect be in such a state that he cannot perceive the connection between secret voting and independent voting, either from its native weakness, or its readiness to be blinded by the feeling of interest, we really see no security against a similar effect from similar causes, in the case of a simple arithmetical proposition.

What we have already said upon this subject contains all the evidence necessary to determine the question. An independent vote is a vote, given in such circumstances, that good or evil, at the will of another, does not depend upon the manner of giving it. A man votes as he pleases, when nothing good is to come to him from his voting in one way, nothing evil from his voting in another. Such, necessarily, is the effect of voting in secrecy. If a man promises, or gives, a bribe to another who votes in secret, he clearly sees what he purchases; he gives his money for a certain chance that the man will vote for him; to the man who votes, the case is the same, whether he votes the one way or the other. The man who would inflict evil for a vote given against him, cannot inflict evil for its being given against him, when he cannot know but it was given for him. In these circumstances, the independence of the vote is complete, and we have already seen, that upon independent voting all the blessings of good government, and deliverance from all the unspeakable evils of bad government, inseparably depend.

It is of no consequence to tell us of certain combinations of circumstances, in which the happy and natural effect of secret voting would be eluded. We know them. We know also that under the present distribution of the suffrage in England, there are cases in which the secrecy would have no effect. Take Old Sarum for an example. Wherever the electors are so few, that good can be extended to the whole body, if the result is in one way, evil if it is in another, independence may be prevented in spite of secrecy. But these cases are a very insignificant proportion. In all counties, and in most boroughs, no such power can be pretended. Wherever the voters consist of thousands, or even of a good many hundreds, a sum to each sufficiently large to secure their votes would exceed the share of the national plunder which any individual could hope to attain; and the power of evil over larger numbers is more limited still. No man can afford to turn out the numerous tenants, either of his lands or his houses, without a serious calamity to himself.

This being the nature of the case, as all men cannot but see, those of our representatives who tell us, that bribery and intimidation would just as much prevail under secret as open voting, must be prepared to affirm, that Englishmen will choose to be slaves, when they may be free; that they will choose to send men to parliament, who will perpetuate the evils of misrule, rather than men who would remove them; even when they can derive no advantage individually from the sending the first sort, nor evil individually from sending the latter. They who can believe this, if any such there be, and they who pretend to believe it, are clearly beyond the reach of argument.

A certain set of cases, however, are held forth to countenance this monstrous pretension; which are so far from being cases in point, that they are mere examples of a gross abuse,—the employment of secrecy in circumstances in which it is a protection, not to pure, but to impure voting. This is a point, upon the elucidation of which a few words will be not ill-bestowed; as it is

one of the principal sources of obscurity, and hence of sophistry, on the subject of the ballot. There are two sets of circumstances in which votes are given. These two sets of circumstances are so very different in their nature, that in the one of them open voting always tends to good, secret voting tends to evil; in the other secret voting alone tends to good, open voting tends to evil. These two sets of circumstances were not very difficult to discover, and yet we do not know that they were ever distinctly pointed out, till Mr. Mill found the explanation necessary in his *History of British India*.*

There is one set of circumstances in which, if men voted free from external influence, they would vote well; another set of circumstances in which, if they voted free from external influence, they would vote ill. We see that in one of the most recent discussions on the subject of the ballot in parliament, Sir Robert Peel tried the effect of a sophism which rested on the confounding these two sets of circumstances together. He brought forward a case of the ill effect of the ballot in that set of circumstances in which its tendency is to produce evil, whence to infer that it could produce none but ill effects in that set of cases in which its tendency is to produce good. He adduced an instance of the corrupt use of secret voting, by members of parliament in the business of parliament, in order to prove that electors would make a bad use of it in choosing the representatives of the nation.

He was ignorant, so we are willing to believe, that the circumstances of the two cases were not only not the same, but diametrically opposite. In the case of members of parliament in the business of parliament there is no security for good voting without the publicity of the voting. In the case of electors voting for representatives the only security for good voting is the secrecy of the voting.

The difference in the two cases is constituted by the difference of the interests. In the one case, the voter has an interest in bad voting, and will vote ill, if he is not prevented. In the other case the voter has an interest in voting well, and will vote well, if he is not prevented. The member of Parliament, who has an interest in abusing, for his own advantage, the powers of government intrusted to him, needs to be restrained. Restraint is found in the power of publicity. The electors, who have an interest in good representatives, need to be saved from the influence of men, who, if returned under that influence, would not be good. They can be saved by secrecy.

To express the circumstances generally; we say, that in that set of circumstances, in which the voter's own interest would lead him to vote well, but other men are likely to create an interest for him which would lead him to vote ill, the vote should be given in secret: in that set of cases, in which the voter's own interest would lead him to vote ill, but public opinion would act upon him as an inducement to vote well, the vote should be given in public. The effect of secrecy in the two cases is perfectly contrary. In the one case it is protection for the operation of the sinister interest; in the other it is protection against it. In the one case it is the safeguard of the public interest; in the other it is the removal of that safeguard.

To maintain the pretence, that perfect secrecy in voting for members of Parliament would not annul the power of influencing the vote, by annexing the prospect either of the matter of good to the giving it in one way, or the matter of evil to the giving it in another; it must be affirmed, in the one case, that the man who has received a bribe, or the promise of one will vote contrary to his inclination, though the receipt of the bribe cannot in the least degree be affected by his voting according to his inclination; that is to say, he will vote against his inclination totally without a motive, which is a moral impossi-

* The distinction has been subsequently presented to view in an admirable pamphlet, entitled "*Statement of the Question of Parliamentary Reform*," and published by Baldwin, Cradock, and Co. in 1821.

bility: and in all other, it must be affirmed, that the man who is threatened with evil, if he votes in a particular way, will vote against his inclination, though he knows that he is not in the smallest degree more likely to suffer the evil if he votes according to his inclination; that is to say, he will vote contrary to his inclination totally without a motive, which is the same moral impossibility as before. No *reductio ad absurdum* is more perfect than this.

The last resource, therefore, of these controvertists is, to deny the possibility of secrecy. How do they make that out? They do not make it out at all. They make out nothing: nor try to do so. That is not their way. They assert; sometimes more nakedly, sometimes more covertly, but still only assert. Please, then, to inform us in what way the secrecy is to be violated; for if it be to be violated, there must be some mode of doing it.

Voters will shew in what way they vote.

Your word *shew* has a double meaning; and is here employed in your usual, that is, equivocating way. It means either seeing or hearing. If you say, that the voter will let it be seen how he votes, we can take perfect security against that. If you say that the man would tell how he votes, we answer, that the man may do so, as much as he pleases; but the secrecy of the vote will be just as perfect as ever; since it must for ever be a secret whether or not he speaks the truth. At any rate the man who proclaims the knavery of giving a prostitute vote, cannot be depended upon for speaking the truth.

We affirm, then, and upon ground which seems impregnable; 1st. that voting may be rendered perfectly secret; 2nd. that secret voting is a perfect security for independent voting; 3rd. that without independent voting all hope of good government is vain; and 4th. that in England there cannot be independent voting without secret voting. If so, we have a pretty complete argument for the ballot.

The language which is held by the enemies of the ballot is wonderful in almost every part of it; but we do not think there is any thing in it, which excites an odder mixture of feelings, in the intelligent mind, than what they say about the high moral consequences of the tumult and uproar of an election. The excitement, they tell us, produced in the people, by such proceedings, is of an admirable tendency. Their minds are thereby filled with the principles of virtue. Tumultuous elections are a kind of school, a *gymnasium*, for the training of patriots.

In the various pretexts which are made use of to decry secret voting, that indispensable foundation of a good representative system, in all countries in which the mass of the people are not in circumstances which place them above dependence; there is nothing which more deserves our attention than the *animus* displayed by them; the peculiar combination of intellectual and moral qualities, which alone seems competent to usher them into the world.

If what is thus affirmed were true, or if the men who affirm it believe it to be true, we should see them endeavouring to turn this admirable instrument of virtue to the greatest account. Every quiet election would, upon this principle, be an evil; it would defraud the country of so much virtue. Every close borough would not only be a blot in the constitution, but a principle of immorality; a cause why the standard of virtue, in the breasts of Englishmen, is so low as it is. Every compromise in a county, by which, for avoiding of contests, a whig member and a tory member step quietly in, would, in truth, be a flagitious conspiracy against the virtue of the country. If the men who are parties to such compromise should defend it, as they commonly do, by saying that it preserves the peace of the county; that it avoids the excitement of hostile affections, which render men bad neighbours, bad relations, bad landlords, bad tenants, bad magistrates, bad masters, and bad servants; that it saves from those scenes of profligacy, that intemperance, that ferocity, that falsehood, that perjury, that prostitution, that open contempt of all moral ties,

which are the grand features of a contested election ; if, we say, the men who find all these advantages in what they call the peace of the country, are the very men who tell us the ballot ought to be rejected, because it tends to prevent the golden virtues which are generated by a contested election,—they will not, at any rate, we hope, pretend to be consistent. If contested and exciting elections were thus efficacious in elevating the standard of public morality, the opulent men of the nation ought to have no object nearer their hearts, than to take effectual measures for preventing any election from ever being peaceable. This would be one of the highest services they could render to their country. Nor is this all. If contested and exciting elections, made to be universal in the country, by the virtue of our opulent men, would produce so much virtue in the people, occurring, as they do, but once in seven years ; how much higher would our virtue be raised if we had the benefit of them every year ? There are other elections, too, in the country, beside the elections for members of Parliament. They ought undoubtedly all of them to be made to contain as much as possible of that which, in elections for members of Parliament, is found to be the cause of such admirable effects ; namely, their tumultuousness. All parish vestries ought to be open vestries. Yet here again we have occasion to deplore the little care of their consistency which is taken by our public men. There is nothing which they are more attached to than select vestries ; which attachment has misled them so far, notwithstanding their love of tumultuous elections, that they have made the House of Commons the perfect model of a select vestry. The same thing nearly may be said, of all elections of magistrates in corporate towns. These elections please our public men, in proportion as they are on the plan of a select vestry. Yet of how much virtue is the nation thus deprived, which would be surely generated in it, according to the same theory of our public men, if all these elections were tumultuous ? We cannot avoid carrying our views even farther. There are various states and conditions to which men are raised by various incidents, most improperly, if the process of tumultuous elections are so salutary upon the public mind. The appointment of clergymen, for example, not only for parochial duties, but to all the dignities, and all the riches, which some of them enjoy, ought to be made in the way which is most conducive to virtue. The peerage, so great a prize, ought assuredly not to be thrown away, by depending either upon individual choice, or the accident of birth, if so much benefit might be derived from it, in making it depend upon a tumultuous election. Nay the sovereignty itself ought to be elective, since, if the virtue generated by the small contest for a member of parliament be an object of any value, that generated by a choice of such ineffable importance to the nation, would be of infinitely greater value.

So much for the *argumentum ad hominem* ; which, in this particular case, all discerning men will see to be of much more importance, than that sort of argument generally is. The intrinsic merits of the question are immediately seen, by a recurrence to the actual business done. There are two parties at an election ; one, that of those who give prostitute votes ; the other, that of those who suborn them. It is of no use to tell us that there are honest votes at elections ; there might be more than any body will pretend there are, without affecting the truth of our description. The honest votes, taking the country as a whole, are a miserable exception. Now, then, draw the consequence. A scene got up for the most deeply immoral and degrading of all human purposes, for the perpetration of a great act of treachery to the nation, for delivering it into the hands of a small number of men, interested in all the abuses of misrule, contrary to the most solemn of all engagements, in the midst of fraud, perjury, and every other abomination, there are men who tell us is a scene, in which Englishmen have to learn their public virtue, and of which, from consideration of their virtues, it would be most dangerous to

deprive them.—Those virtues in them, which fit them for the purposes of their suborners, they do learn there in great perfection. That is a truth beyond all dispute. No wonder the school should have patrons, in a class of men so deeply interested in its success.

One objection still remains, which, though we shall be able to shew that it rests entirely on misapprehension, we regard with far more respect than any of those which we have previously noticed; because the point of morality to which it refers is of the utmost importance, and because we know that it affects the minds of some men, who, on account both of their intellectual and moral qualities, are entitled to our highest esteem. These men say, that secret voting, to make it answer its end, supposes mendacity. The man who is bribed, promises to vote one way, and actually votes another. The man who may be turned out of his house, or his farm, or suffer any other evil, votes one way, while he says that he votes another. This violation of truth, they say, is so odious, that it renders odious and ineligible whatever is necessarily combined with it.

This objection requires the more words to shew the nature of it truly, because the evil which it points at is all upon the surface, and is easily seen; the evil which is prevented lies deep, and can only be seen by an attentive observer.—Of two evils choose the least,—is, nevertheless, the proper rule, in this, as in every other case of human deliberation.

Of so much importance is it to mankind, that they should be able to confide in what is said to them by one another, that no violation of the truth which would affect that end, can be justified.

There are circumstances, however, in which another man is not entitled to the truth; and these circumstances create a radical distinction. The cases in which men are not entitled to the truth constitute a class by themselves; subject to rules altogether different from the class of cases in which they are entitled to the truth.

Men are not entitled to the truth, when they would make a bad use of it. This is a maxim sanctioned by the moral judgment and the practice of all ages and nations. When men withhold the truth from such parties, they in fact do not violate the rule of veracity; they neither feel conscious of any guilt in themselves, nor is any ever imputed to them by others. The rule of veracity does not consist in giving information to a villain which he will employ in forwarding his villainous ends. Wrong information, for the prevention of evil, and, in certain circumstances, for the promotion of good, has rarely been classed among forbidden means by any set of men civilized or barbarian. Who that saw a fellow-creature hiding himself from his intruding murderer, but would say to the ruffian whatever was most likely to mislead him in his pursuit? Instances might be multiplied without end. Take one of an ordinary sort. The Physician is not blamed, he does not consider himself as violating the sacred rule of veracity, when he assures his patient that he is in no danger, though he knows him to be in the greatest.

In no instance is wrong information conducive to the prevention of evil of such magnitude, as when it is conducive to the prevention of misrule. In no instance is any man less entitled to right information, than when he would employ it for the perpetration of misrule. If in every conceivable instance wrong information is not to be considered a violation of the rule of veracity, not a breach of morality, but on the contrary a meritorious act, it is, when it is necessary to defeat such a purpose as this.

Among the gross inconsistencies which crowd the minds of Englishmen, one of the most remarkable is that which exists between the abhorrence of the ballot, on account of the supposed mendacity connected with it, and the habitual conduct of the men who express that abhorrence. The same menda-

city, exactly, if they persist in calling it mendacity, which a voter may use to baffle his corrupter, they themselves practise every day from the slightest motives. Every time they write "obedient, humble servant," at the bottom of a letter, they tell a lie, if lie it must be called, of the very same description. Every time they direct a servant to say at their door to the people who want them, that they are not at home, when they are at home, they not only lie themselves, but in this instance have no scruple at all in making another person lie, notwithstanding the intolerable pollution they ascribe to it in the case of the ballot. It surely is not necessary for us to go on shewing how much of the whole business of life, in this purest of countries, is carried on by lying, if words and actions conveying false information deserve this opprobrious name. Let us look to more solemn occasions. The law hardly does any thing but by means of a lie; witness the writs which give commencement to a suit; and witness, to go no farther, pleadings of almost all descriptions. Not only breaches of veracity, but breaches of oath, are committed with the utmost indifference. How common is it, for jurors on their oaths, to declare an article worth but a few shillings, which they know to be worth, perhaps, ten times as many pounds, only that they may not subject a criminal to a greater punishment than he deserves; how necessarily does the law requiring unanimity in juries compel a part of the jury in almost all doubtful cases to perjure themselves? We need but allude to the daily use of fiscal oaths, and theological oaths, to be reminded of the perfect callousness with which false swearing is practised and regarded. Nay, remarkable as it must be esteemed, we on no occasion lie more grossly, and habitually, than in our devotions; in our addresses to God himself, at the very time that we are professing with our lips that we believe him omniscient, and acquainted with our innermost thoughts. Do we not hear people daily telling God in their prayers that they renounce the pomps and vanities of the world, when we know their hearts are filled with nothing else? Does not every man who repeats the prayer, called the Lord's, tell the Deity, that he wishes "not to be led into temptation?" And do we not know many such men devoting all their thoughts to the accumulating of riches, or the acquisition of worldly grandeur, which the scripture tells them are the greatest of temptations; since it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of heaven?—Need we go on?—Surely not.

And yet have we men, who after seeing to how great a degree the whole tissue of our lives is formed of lying, and after being themselves inured to it, profess so violent a hatred of the falsehood accidental to a vote rendered independent by secrecy, as to account the independence, and all the inestimable benefits which flow from it, less than an equivalent? We should have accounted this one of the most perfect of all possible specimens of Tartuffizing, if we did not know that there are valuable men, who have formed with the false information, which may occasionally be necessary to obtain the independence of which secrecy is the means, such an association of ideas, as they do unhappily mistake for moral disapprobation.

But beside the proof we have given, that the wrong information incidental to the ballot belongs not to the class of cases in which the moral rule of veracity is concerned; beside the certainty of the rule, that the least of two evils is to be chosen: and the perfect proof by the practice of Englishmen, that in innumerable instances they regard the use of falsehood as little or no evil, while bad government is acknowledged to be the worst of all evils; beside all this, we have still to observe that the objection assumes what is not true. It assumes that every vote which would be suborned, if openly given, would be attended with mendacity if given secretly.

First observe, that if this were so, the cases, in respect of mendacity, would only be equal. Every suborned vote is by the supposition a mendacious vote.

What ground then is there for any preference on the score of veracity ; and what ground is there not for preference on the score of national good ? This objection, drawn from the love of veracity, is thus clearly seen to be utterly worthless.

Such, however, is the admirable working of the ballot, that it would preclude the occasion for mendacity in many, in probably a great majority of instances, from the beginning ; and in the end would utterly abolish it. If men never continue to do any thing in vain, men will not seek promises from others, in circumstances in which the promise is of no use to them. Where there is no promising at all, there can be no false promising. The ballot, therefore, is really the means of delivering votes from mendacity. One of the arguments in favour of secret voting springs from the very source, from which this mistaken objection is drawn.

Suppose a man to go about, asking promises from electors who vote in secret. He obtains them, of course, from all the men, from whom he would have obtained a prostitute vote in the case of publicity. An act of mendacity is necessary in either case, whether the promise is kept or broken. But of two lies, equal to a man in other respects, he may pretty surely be expected to prefer that which favours his own inclinations. The promise, therefore, is to the man who exacts it no security for the attainment of his object. It is obviously the reverse, if the attempt to impose an odious chain be felt as an injury by the man who is sought to be degraded. Every man from whom a promise is exacted to vote in one way, has received a new motive to vote in the opposite way, by this badge of slavery nefariously fastened upon him. It is abundantly certain, that the exaction of promises,—in these circumstances more than useless,—would soon be abandoned, and voting would be as pure of falsehood as it would be of dependence.

Nor would this be the only moral effect of secret voting ; it would have others of the greatest extent, and importance. This, undoubtedly, is one of the most interesting points of view in which the subject can be considered. Take away from the men of property the power of obtaining the suffrages of the people by improper means, and you may deem it certain that they will immediately apply themselves to the obtaining them by proper means.

It is impossible not to be delighted with the idea of the consequences which would result from such a change. Whereas, at present, the traffic which takes place between the parties who give and the parties who obtain votes, corrupts them both ; the intercourse between them, in the other case which we have supposed, would operate most powerfully to their mutual improvement.

The evidence of this we think is incontestible. The moment it was seen that the people gave their suffrages only to those whom they regarded as best endowed with the qualities which fit men for the duties of legislation, the men of property would exert themselves to attain and to display those qualities. They would then have a motive for their attainment, of which at present they are nearly destitute. Stores of knowledge, habits of mental application, of self-denial, of preferring the public interest to the private interest, whenever there is incompatibility between them, are not easily acquired ; and never will be acquired (bating remarkable exceptions) by those who have not a strong motive to acquire them.

We think, that putting the elective suffrage on a proper footing would afford that motive to the men of property in England. Men of property love distinction ; but the distinction of property, where it is not connected with political power, or strongly associated with the idea of it, is insignificant. The great desire of men of property, therefore, always will be for the distinction connected with public services. But, if they had an adequate motive for the acquisition, in a superior degree, of the high mental qualities, which fit men

for the discharge of public duties, it cannot be doubted that they have great, and peculiar advantages, for the accomplishment of their purpose. Other men, even those who are not confined to mechanical drudgery, are under the necessity of employing the greater part of their lives, in earning the means either of subsistence or independence. The men who are born to a property which places them above such necessity, can employ the whole of their lives in acquiring the knowledge, the talents, and the virtues, which would entitle them to the confidence of their fellow citizens. With equal motive, and superior advantages, they would, of course, in general, have superior success. They would be the foremost men in the country, and so they would be esteemed.

Δεῖ, says Plato, (Πολιτ. γ.) speaking after Phocylides, ὅταν τῷ ἄνθρωπῳ βίος ᾗ, ἀρετὴν ἀσκεῖν. "A man has peculiar advantages for attaining the highest excellence of his nature, when he is above the necessity of labouring for the means of subsistence."

The man who is placed in these circumstances, has not only the whole of his time to bestow, in early life, upon the acquisitions which fit him for the business of legislation and government; he alone, and not the man without fortune, who is still engaged in other pursuits, can bestow his time and attention, undivided, upon the public services with which he is intrusted. Our opinion, therefore, is, that the business of government is properly the business of the rich; and that they will always obtain it, either by bad means, or good. Upon this every thing depends. If they obtain it by bad means, the government is bad. If they obtain it by good means, the government is sure to be good. The only good means of obtaining it are, the free suffrage of the people.

Radical Reformers are commonly stigmatized in the lump; and, as names of peculiar opprobrium among the suborners of votes, they are called Democrats, and Republicans. We see not why either of these names, unless misconstrued, should be dishonourable. For our parts, however, we are Aristocrats. We think it best, that government should be placed in the hands of the ἀριστοί; not only in the sense of the Greeks, who understood by that term the βελτιστοί; but in that of the moderns, who understand by it only the Rich. We only desire that it be placed in the hands of the rich upon such terms as will make them the ἀριστοί and βελτιστοί. Whoever are the ἀριστοί and βελτιστοί, we desire to be governed by them; and, with the suffrage upon a proper footing, we have no doubt that they would be the Rich.

If the effect of placing the suffrage upon a proper footing would be thus salutary, with regard to the intellectual and moral qualities of the rich; let us inquire next what it would be in regard to the rest of the community.

We have seen that, while votes are liable to be suborned, and while the rich obtain their purpose with the people by corrupting them, they do corrupt them. The consequence is inevitable; and neither the insensibility to moral evil which habit produces, nor all the refinements of modern disguise, can hinder any fair observer from understanding the Tragi-comedy of which we are the spectators.

But, if the business of the rich is to corrupt the people, when they can obtain their purpose by corrupting them, it will no less certainly be their endeavour to improve them, if you render it impossible for them to obtain their purpose with the people by any other means than improving them.

Who will deny that this would be the consequence of placing the suffrage upon a proper foundation? When the people are under no inducement to choose representatives from any other consideration than that of their fitness, it becomes immediately the interest of the rich, that none but the fittest should be chosen. Whenever the benefits of misrule are taken out of the hands of the rich, the rich have then the strongest interest in good government. Good government, however, nothing but the good choice of the people can procure.

But the more wise and the more virtuous the people can be rendered, the goodness of their choice is rendered the more certain. It becomes, immediately, therefore, the interest of the rich, to employ their endeavours to raise the intellects and morals of the people to the highest pitch; that no artifice may be able to deceive, or interest to seduce them, either in regard to what is best to be done for their country, or the men who are fittest to promote it.

But, if the men of power and influence in the country, along with sufficient motives to take the utmost pains with their own intellects and morals, had the like motives to take pains with the intellects and morals of the people; to do whatever could be done for rendering their early education perfect; to take the utmost care of their morals through life, by a correct use of their approbation and disapprobation, as well as their power of giving and withholding good; to watch over the instruction given to them; to take them out of the hands of those who have an interest in giving them wrong opinions; to use the press with skill and activity, for the producing all sorts of salutary impressions, and obviating every impression of a different kind; what delightful consequences would ensue? We should then have a community, through which wisdom and virtue would be universally diffused; and of which the different classes would be knit together by the ties of mutual benefaction. In those circumstances, the order and harmony of society would be perfect. The business of government would be carried on with the utmost simplicity, because purely for the good of all. Every individual would exert himself in his sphere to provide for his own wants, and have wherewithal to benefit others; and few men would be destitute of that prudence and energy which would place, and keep them, in that situation.

Nor in all this is there one Eutopian idea. There is not a consequence here anticipated, which does not flow from the principles of human nature, as necessarily as the actual effects, so woefully different, which we now experience. All that is necessary is, so to alter the position of the leading classes with respect to the rest of the community, that they may have an interest in the wisdom and virtue both of themselves and others. It is not more extraordinary than true, that this is to be accomplished, and all its admirable consequences may be insured, by placing the Suffrage for Representatives on a proper foundation.

The evidence of all this is so clear and irrefragable, that it ought to obtain attention. The time is coming when it will obtain all the attention which it deserves. At present we believe it has but little chance.

THE END.

